

"From a letter of Dr. W. Peters in the 'Proceedings of the Zool. Soc.' 1864, p. 377, I find that a casual word of mine has given that gentleman some annoyance which on my part was not intended.

"On handing over the Reptiles collected by me in Eastern Tropical Africa to the British Museum, Dr. Gray remarked that one of them, *Gerrhosaurus robustus*, was, according to Dr. Peters, named '*Caaiia*' by the natives of Tete.

"I had not then seen Dr. Peters's paper 'On the Reptiles of Mosambique,' and I remarked that this word meant in the native language 'I don't know.' To this I attached no importance, nor was it meant for publication; still less was I aware that the word '*Caaiia*' had been a misprint.

"Dr. Livingstone writes me thus:—'Mr. Moffat has been collecting words in the Sechuana language for the last forty-three years, and finds new ones every week. In eight years I had upwards of seven thousand, and rejected many hundreds either as uncouth or to me quite useless. I think there were eleven names for a lion, and no end of words meaning different shades of fools'!

"Dr. Peters has referred me to a vocabulary of the Mozambique languages, published by Dr. Wm. H. J. Black, from manuscripts of his and from other materials, now including minerals. Only about 900 words are given here, whereas, judging from what Dr. Livingstone says of the Sechuana, this dialect must contain an equal number of terms; and no one could, in my opinion, in nine months collect even the common expressions. Let me assure Dr. Peters that there is no necessity for supposing that the language has changed since 1845, because one word is omitted from his vocabulary.

"The word '*penu*,' which Dr. Peters gives as signifying 'I don't know,' does so only inferentially, and means literally 'perhaps,' 'it may be,' 'possibly.' There are other expressions more definite, and in common use.

"In regard to the last part of Dr. Peters's letter, I will remark that the majority of Tette fowls live in the huts of the people, and not on perches. And I may remind him of the wide-spread idea in Africa that the bite of the Chameleon (*Chamæleon dilepis*) is venomous to man, although it possesses no means of inflicting more than a slight squeeze with its weak jaws. He will therefore possibly concede that the same people may believe that the *Gerrhosaurus* kills fowls."

The following papers were read:—

1. DESCRIPTION OF A NEW SPECIES OF PORPOISE IN THE MUSEUM OF BUENOS AYRES. BY DR. H. BURMEISTER, F.M.Z.S.

*PHOCÆNA SPINIPINNIS*, sp. nov.

The animal has the general figure of the common European species, but differs entirely in the position of the dorsal fin, which is placed further backwards, and has spines on the upper edge.

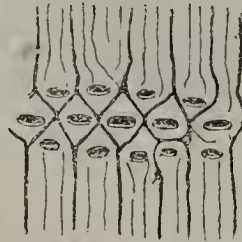
The whole body is black, without any other colour, and the sur-

face of the skin is transversely striated with fine excavated lines, like the inside of the human hand. The upper lip is somewhat shorter than the under, and the figure of the mouth, on both sides, rather curved behind; the length of the opening is  $8\frac{1}{2}$  centim. on each side. From the hinder corner of the mouth the eye is distant 7 centim., and from the eye to the beginning of the pectoral fin is 16 centim. The opening of the nose has the form of a broad transverse ridge, somewhat curved forwards; it is 3 centim. broad, and 16 centim. distant from the top of the upper lip. The figure of the whole body is fusiform, but much more elongated behind than before; it measures from the top of the upper lip to the notch of the tail-fin 162 centim., and the circumference of the thickest part of the body, at the middle, is 102 centim.

Fig. 1.



Fig. 2.



The distance from the nasal aperture to the beginning of the dorsal fin is 84 centim.; but the elevation of this fin is so gradual, that it is difficult to say exactly where it begins. The figure of the whole fin is triangular, somewhat curved forwards near the end, and its height 14 centim. (see fig. 1). This curving forwards is a peculiar and very distinguishing character of the species, as is also the clothing of the anterior margin of the fin with small spines. These spines are not different from the skin, but elevations of the skin itself, like small angles, of an elongated-oval form. I have figured part of the middle (where the spines are most elevated) as seen from above (see fig. 2), to show that every spine is surrounded by a ridge of the skin, and that from the sides of the lateral spines other ridges begin. Some small spines begin in the middle of the back, at the distance of 25 centim. in front of the fin, as a single line of moderate spines; but soon another line begins on each side, so that in the beginning of the fin there are already three lines of spines. These three lines are continued over the whole rounded anterior margin of the fin, and are augmented on both sides by other small spines irregularly scattered, so that the whole number of spine-lines in the middle of the fin is five. Towards the end of the fin they become smaller, and on the rounded tip of the fin there are no spines at all.

From the hinder margin of the dorsal fin to the notch of the tail-fin is 54 centim. The tail-fin is 39 centim. broad, and each fluke 20 centim. long on the anterior margin. This margin is somewhat curved backwards, and the hinder margin sinuated.

The underside of the body is somewhat more curved and extended than the upper side, and the tail more descending.

The anus is situated under the beginning of the dorsal fin, 70 centim. distant from the notch of the tail-fin.

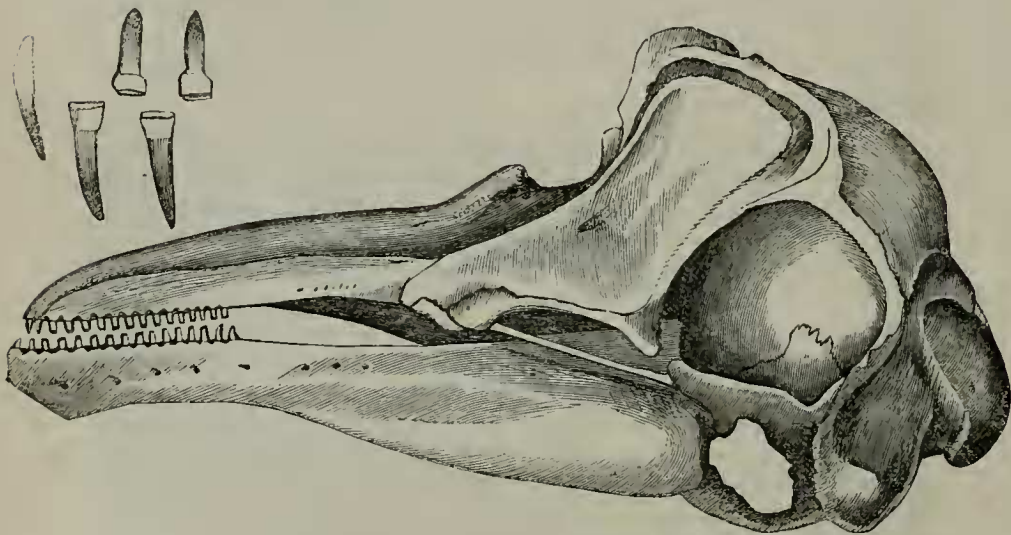
The individual seems to be a very young one, because all vestiges of genital organs are wanting in the exterior. The anus has a dozen radial folds, of which the largest, 6 centim. long, runs forwards; all are very deep, and transversely ridged.

The pectoral fin is falcated, 26 centim. long and 10 broad. At its proximal end there are many fine ridges in the skin, and in the middle part are ridges indicating the finger-bones beneath.

The skull proves that the animal is a very young one, and that it has come perhaps only to half its natural size; because all the bones are very weak, not perfectly ossified, and the vomer entirely cartilaginous. It has the general figure of the skull of the European *Phocæna*, differing principally in the form of the hinder part of the intermaxillary bones, which is more abruptly elevated in this new species than in the European (see figs. 4 & 5).

Fig. 3.

Fig. 4.

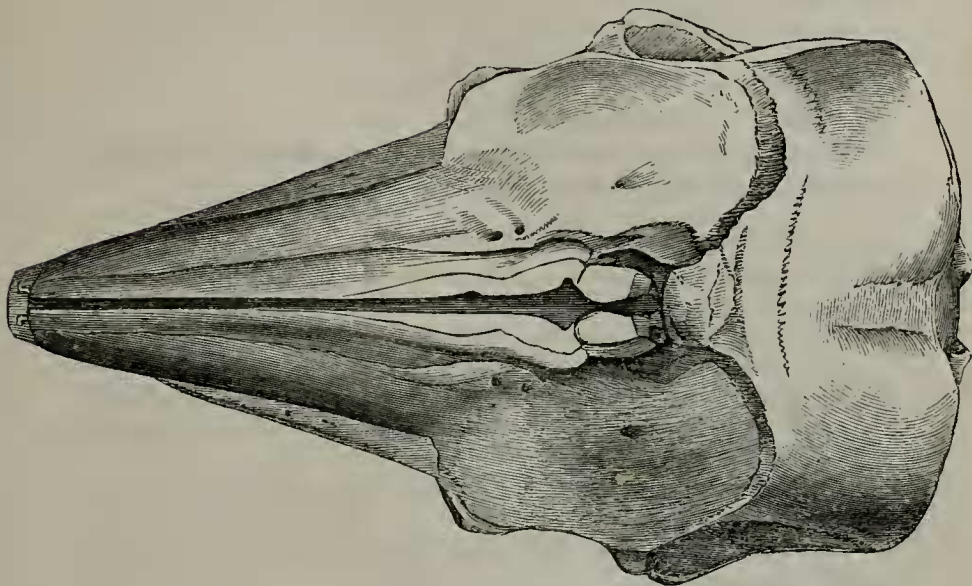


Side view of the skull of *Phocæna spinipinnis*, reduced one-third.

The upper jaw has sixteen small teeth, and the lower jaw seventeen, on each side, there being no vestige of an alveolar ridge behind them in either jaw. The first teeth are smaller and conical, the hinder broader and truncated, as seen in figures 3 & 4. This is another character distinguishing it from the European species, the skull of a young individual of the latter, which I examined, had twenty-four teeth in the upper jaw, and twenty-five in the lower, in both extending more towards the hinder part of the jaw than in the new species.

The specimen of *P. spinipinnis* which is preserved in the public Museum of Buenos Ayres, was captured in the mouth of the River

Fig. 5.



Skull of *Phocæna spinipinnis*, seen from above, reduced one-third.

Plata, and was afterwards exhibited in Buenos Ayres to the public, some years before I came to this country.

Length of the whole skull, 29 centim.

Breadth between the orbits, 17 centim.

Length of the external margin of the upper jaw, 12 centim. ; of the lower jaw, 22 centim.

*Note.*—The tympanic bone is lost ; the figure is therefore defective in this part.

2. LIST OF THE LAND AND FRESHWATER SHELLS OF THE ZAMBESI AND LAKE NYASSA, EASTERN TROPICAL AFRICA, COLLECTED BY JOHN KIRK, M.D., F.L.S., &C. BY DR. H. DOHRN.

[The following list of land and freshwater shells, collected by me on the Zambesi and Lake Nyassa, has been drawn up by Dr. H. Dohrn, who has kindly undertaken their examination and description.

The *Unionidæ* of the lake having previously been described and figured by Isaac Lea, in a paper read before the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, April 12th, 1864, are not here included. They numbered six species, and one still remains undescribed.

Of the twenty-four species noticed in this list by Dr. Dohrn, seven prove new to science, thirteen have been known before, and four belong to difficult families. To each species I have added the localities where found.